

**INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA**

By

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DECLARATION

I, **MUVHULAWA ESTHER MUNANO**, hereby declare that this mini-dissertation for the purpose of obtaining the Degree of Magister Technologiae Business Administration (MTech BA), at the University of South Africa, hereby submitted by me, has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other institution, and that this is my own work in design and execution. All reference materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

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DEDICATIONS

I am dedicating this mini-thesis to my husband Mr Thomani Doctor Munano, and my children, Thendo, Rabelani, Ndivhuwo, Lusani and my beloved mother, Maggie Mufati Mabuda. I love you all.

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the possible determinants of operational efficiency at the University of Venda, which was premised on the extent to which stakeholders are involved in the strategic planning of the institution. The aim of the study was to establish the stakeholders' involvement in the strategic planning of the University of Venda. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data during August and October 2011. The study was conducted at the University of Venda, Vhembe District in the Limpopo Province. A non-probability sampling procedure was used to select respondents. The results revealed that whilst the stakeholders seem to be involved in the process of the strategic planning, the extent of stakeholders' involvement has largely remained contentious. The results further indicate that not all stakeholders are involved in the strategic planning process at the University of Venda. Although stakeholders are invited to participate, the process of strategic planning is absolutely dominated by the management cadre, reducing the rest participants into the doldrums. Those who are directly affected by the strategic plan are least involved in the process of the planning. Because of the lack of involvement and communication regarding the strategic planning process, the findings reveal that the majority of stakeholders were de-motivated in that regard, culminating in their lack-lustre approach towards the implementation of the orchestrated plan. The resultant lack of buy-in by the affected stakeholders, essentially the internal stakeholders (staff members and the student community), eventually hamper the actualisation of the targeted goals of the strategic plans. These results suggest that the strategic plan review should be an on-going process in order to update and involve the university community of the strategic planning processes. Proper feedback and communication on strategic planning processes should be implemented. More importantly, the stakeholders' involvement and consultation on the strategic planning should be galvanized, since most of the staff members and students seem to be unaware of the strategic planning process at the University of Venda, let alone its contents and aspirations.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABET	-	Adult Basic Education and Training
CHETEL	-	Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning
CRDPA	-	Centre for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation
GRI	-	Global Reporting Initiative
HE	-	Higher Education
HEMIS	-	Higher Education Management Information System
ICT	-	Information Communication Technology
IPQA	-	Institutional Planning and Quality Assurance
SPSS	-	Statistical Package of Social Sciences
SWOT	-	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity and Threats
UNISA	-	University of South Africa
UNIVEN	-	University of Venda

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

University of Venda (UNIVEN) is a rural-based university located in Thohoyandou in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province. It was established in 1982 to cater for the educational needs of the people domiciled in the hitherto Homeland of Venda. Since its establishment, the University has experienced tremendous growth and changes, both structural and administrative. A good example is the restructuring process, which calls for the development of new qualifications structure and programme profile. Some more strategic structural changes include the establishment of the Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning (CHETEL), and the Centre for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation (CRDPA) that offer a holistic range of programmes and services on teaching and learning to guarantee continuous improvement in throughput and graduation rates at UNIVEN.

Unlike during its infancy when the University had only the School of Education, the University now pools eight schools, namely the School of Education, School of Human Sciences, School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, School of Health Sciences, School of Agriculture, School of Environmental Sciences, School of Management Sciences and School of Law

UNIVEN is one of the two rural institutions providing higher education for the people of the Limpopo Province. Since its days as a homeland university, the University has expanded its student enrolments to such an extent that its carrying capacity has come increasingly under pressure. Currently, UNIVEN has over 11000 enrolled students distributed across eight schools. These schools offer qualifications from certificates and undergraduate degrees to postgraduate qualifications. Students' enrolment patterns indicate that UNIVEN is predominantly an undergraduate higher education institution. The academic, administrative and support tasks necessary for the functioning of the University are carried out by 710 staff members, comprising 343 academics and 367 administration and service staff.

The University of Venda's vision is to be at the centre of tertiary education for rural and regional development in Southern Africa, that means the Centre for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation (CRDPA) supports the aligned government programme like agricultural

economic activities in the Vhembe District. Ultimately the University seeks to be quality-driven, financially sustainable and a rural-based comprehensive university. To cope with the increasing enlargement of its operations, the University is presupposed to improve its strategic planning process, essentially, the aspect that deals with the stakeholders' involvement.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Research suggests that strategic planning is a conscious process by which an institution assesses its current state and the likely future condition of its environment (Hayward and Ncayiyana, 2003:3). The outcome of the organisational analysis is then incorporated into the future-orientated planning, organised strategies (both generic and grand), policy initiatives and operational processes and procedures. In doing this, the organisational planning process is enlarged to accommodate as much participatory input as possible such that sense of belonging and buy-in of the larger organisational members are achieved – hence, the need for stakeholders involvement.

Stakeholders are entities or individuals that can reasonably be expected to be significantly affected by the organisation's activities, products, and/or services and whose actions can reasonably be expected to affect the ability of the organisation to successfully implement its strategies and achieve its objectives (GRI, 2002). The stakeholders are thus important to the organization by virtue of their ability to influence the planning in the organisation. As a result, their views are supposed to be a component of decision making. Management holds much of the decision-making powers in the organization, and as such it needs some approval from stakeholders to remain popular, and ultimately successful in its strategic targets.

It is important for an organisation to involve stakeholders in its strategic planning processes to ensure that all structures are represented from the grassroots level. It becomes very easy for the stakeholders to buy-in and to implement the plan if they have been involved in the planning. They may contribute to the success of the strategic planning. In every organisation, several stakeholders are impacted by the strategic plan. These stakeholders may also be able to have an impact on this plan as they may have information, experience, or insight that would be helpful in developing the plan.

Stakeholders could furthermore be in a position to either support or block progress of the strategic plan or have a vested interest in the work, or decision makers who approve and implement any aspect of the plan. This is an important point especially as it can facilitate or hinder strategy implementation and giving rise to a performance gap. This is strengthened by King 11 report (2002) which suggests the use of an “inclusive approach” in the engagement of stakeholders where the purpose and values of the institution are defined, and communicated to all stakeholders. The report also states that stakeholders need to be considered when developing the strategy of the institution by moving from the single to the triple bottom line reporting, considering environmental, social and economic concerns. In general, it is imperative to involve stakeholders in the development of strategic plan in order to include their point of view and the intent of their involvement to result in change or a new direction, and especially the implementation of strategy.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

A problem statement is defined as a problem that exists in the literature, theory, or practice that generally leads to the need for a study, which is capable of solving the identified problem (Creswell, 2009). In this specific research, whilst the stakeholders seem to be involved in the process of the strategic planning at the University of Venda, the extent of stakeholders involvement have largely remained contentious. More specifically, the structural lines between stakeholders involvement/exclusion are blurring at the university. It is not conspicuous as to what extent the University’s stakeholders are involved in strategic planning. Evidence suggests that the performance gap (between the target and actual realisation) that has been identified in the institution is as a result of the limited involvement of University’s stakeholders in the strategic planning process.

However, it could also be argued that the resultant performance gap is a function of other factors other than the lack of adequate involvement of the stakeholders. During the initial investigations, it was observed that not all relevant stakeholders are involved in the strategic planning process, which accounts to a degree for the performance gap. The question that now arises is to identify the extent to which the stakeholders are involved in the strategic planning process, as a way of morale-boosting towards achieving the overall institutional targets. As such, the question arises on how the strategic planning process works (in practice) at the University of Venda. More specifically, the identification of the structural category of people

that are involved, when they are involved, what their roles are and to what extent their involvement influences their overall performance.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study sets out to achieve the following objectives:

Primary Objectives

- 1.4.1 To establish the effect of stakeholder involvement in strategic planning process, and the ultimate implication of their involvement or lack of involvement on the overall performance.
- 1.4.2 To determine how different stakeholders are involved in strategic planning at the University of Venda.
- 1.4.3 To identify what could possibly be done to bridge the identified gap in performance at the University.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The researcher was guided by the following questions:

- 1.5.1 What is the stakeholders' structural composition of the strategic planning process at the University of Venda?
- 1.5.2 To what extent are stakeholders involved in the strategic planning, i.e. what is their involvement?
- 1.5.3 How effective are the stakeholders' involvement in the process of crafting strategic plan for the University?
- 1.5.4 What are the implications of the structural composition of the stakeholders' involvement in the strategic planning at the University of Venda?
- 1.5.5 How can the process of stakeholders' involvement be improved to achieve a better performance level/standard?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Adding to the understanding of the stakeholders' involvement at the University of Venda context, the significance of this study will be to ensure long term survival and growth of the University, as it contributes to the wealth of intellectual capacity of humanity, and more specifically, South Africa. This study was also intended to launch the institution into a landmark of efficiency and excellence, through quality service delivery and amiable working environment.

1.7 VALUE OF THE STUDY

The study will sensitize management on issues relating to successful practices pertaining to strategic planning as practice. Finally the results of this study also add to the knowledge base on involvement of stakeholders in strategic planning in Higher Education (HE).

1.8 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study assumes that the larger constituents of the internal stakeholder groups (essentially, the line managers and the students) are not adequately involved in the strategic planning of the University of Venda, thereby leading to discontent and poor implementation of strategies.

1.9 DEFINITION OF MAJOR CONCEPTS

1.9.1 Involvement – is the act of taking part in an activity, event or situation (MacMillan Dictionary, 2009)

1.9.2 Stakeholders – are defined as any person or group who have an interest in, or will be affected by, any planned changes in an organisation. They can be external or inertial (NHS Centre for Involvement, 2008). For the purpose of this study, stakeholders refer to university management, academic staff, administrative staff, service staff and students.

1.9.3 Management – is a process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the efforts of organization members and of using all other organizational resources to achieve the stated organizational goals (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 2011)

1.9.4 Strategic planning – is a conscious process by which an institution assesses its current state and the likely future condition of its environment, identifies possible future states for itself, and then develops organised strategies, policies, and procedures for selecting and getting to one or more of them (Hayward and Ncayiyana, 2003:3).

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.10.1 Research Design

A research design is the plan according to which we obtain research participants (subjects) and collect information from them (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005:46). For the purpose of this study, a quantitative research design was used. The purpose of quantitative research is to evaluate objective data consisting of numbers (Welman, et al. 2005). This research used primary data that is generated from a set of self-administered questionnaires, which were analysed quantitatively using a computer loaded with a Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) to draw conclusions that are capable of informing structural changes in the strategic planning of the University.

1.10.2 Population and Sampling

1.10.2.1 Population

Population is the study subjects and consists of individuals, groups, organization, human, products and events or the condition to which they are exposed (Welman, et al, 2005). For the purpose of this study, the internal stakeholders of the University of Venda were used as population which consists of the senior management, academic staff, administrative staff, service staff and students representatives.

1.10.2.2 Sampling Method

Babbie and Mouton (2001:83) state that sampling is the proportion for elements in the population for a sample. More specifically, a non-probability sampling entails the selection of the sample on random basis, without consideration for any statistical pattern. This is done where the population of the study is composed of sample units that share similar/common characteristics (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). For the purpose of this study, a non-probability

sampling method was used, given that the samples were drawn among a population that shares common measurable traits.

In order to ensure adequate participation on the study, quota sampling was used to ensure that 20% of senior management, 20% of academic staff, 20% administrative, 20% of service staff and 20% of students' representatives (to a total of 100%) of the total population took part in the study.

1.10.2.3 Research Instrument

Welman et al. (2005) state that the study instrument as a technique for data collection is used when the researcher wants to collect data from respondents. For the purpose of this study a structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was pre-tested before being used for collecting data.

1.10.2.4 Data Collection Procedure

Babbie (1990:58) states that data collection methods are the actual ways of collecting data for a study, conducting an experiment or focusing on the analysis of statistics that are already created by others. The researcher used close-ended questions to generate a response pattern that was analysed using SPSS. Permission was sought and obtained from the university to conduct this study before any attempt to collect data from the respondents was initiated. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the respondents, as well as collection of completed questionnaires.

1.10.2.5 Data analysis

Data was analysed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS version 19).

1.11 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

According to Terre-Blanche and Durrheim (1999:8) reliability refers to the dependability of a measurement instrument, that is, the extent to which the instrument yield, the same results on repeated trials. Malhotra (2004:264) defines the validity of a scale as the extent to which

differences in observed scale scores reflect time differences among objects on the characteristics being measure, rather than systematic or random error.

The researcher strived to obtain information from the stakeholders who have an understanding of strategic planning and strategy as a practice at the University of Venda so that the findings of the study can be credible and reliable. Thorough collaboration between the researcher and the respondents was emphasized. The researcher's activities regarding the study were consistent with the aim of producing credible and reliable findings.

1.12 PILOT STUDY

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:307), pilot testing should be done with respondents similar to those in the sample. Before administering the questionnaires, the researcher conducted a pre-test of questionnaires with colleagues in the academic, administrative, service work sections, students, and those in management level position. The researcher wanted to ensure that the research questions would be answered by all groups.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Cooper and Schindler (2003) states that, a research design should prevent causing mental or physical harm to participants and make data integrity a first priority. Ethical issues in research reflect important moral concerns about the practice of responsible behaviors in society. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003:120), ethics are norms or standards of behaviors that guide moral choices about behaviours and our relationships with others. The purpose of ethics in research is to make sure that no one is harmed or suffers adverse consequences from research activities. In this study the researcher adhered to the following ethics:

1.13.1 Informed Consent

The researcher briefed the participants about the purpose of the research to enable them to make an informed decision to participate. For the purpose of this study the researcher ensured that participants are given the choice to participate.

1.13.2 Confidentiality

Information provided by participants, particularly sensitive and personal information should be protected and made unavailable to anyone other than the researcher. The researcher assured respondents that the information they give would be used for the purposes of this study only.

1.14 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Time constraints may be the major limitation of the study, since the researcher is working in a very busy environment wherein it is practically not always possible to get out of the workstation. Also, lack of resources constitutes another limitation, since the researcher is not sufficiently funded to conduct the study, the University of Venda is poorly equipped with academic materials, and the reluctance of participants may also pose some limitations.

1.15 CONCLUSION

In Chapter one the researcher provided an introductory part of the research study. Generally, the discussion of this chapter is centred on the, background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions of the study, definition of major concepts, research design and methodology, validity and reliability, pilot study, limitations of the study, ethical considerations and the research plan and time frame.

CHAPTER 2

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided the introduction to this study. It included the background to the research, the problem statement, and the objectives of the research, the research design and methodology, validity and reliability of the research, the limitation of the study and ethical consideration.

In this chapter the relevant literature is reviewed to get a better understanding of the following: stakeholders involvement in the strategic planning, stakeholders participation in the strategic planning, the importance of stakeholders involvement in the strategic planning, stakeholders participation in the strategic planning process, the importance of stakeholders' participation in the strategic planning, benefits of stakeholders involvement in strategic planning, understanding strategic planning in higher education, the models in which strategic planning are developed, University of Venda (UNIVEN) strategic plan, the stakeholders involvement in the University of Venda strategic plan and the researchers' assumption on the lack of stakeholders involvement at the University of Venda strategic planning.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING

The starting point for correctly identifying strategic factors and developing successful strategies is to know the stakeholders (Graham, 2005). According to Sequeira and Warner (2007), stakeholders are persons or groups of people who are directly or indirectly affected by a project, as well as those who may have interest in a project and/or the ability to influence its outcome, either positively or negatively. The whole process of developing strategies becomes more manageable when the organization's environment is broken into identifiable key stakeholders Graham (2005). According to Hayward and Ncayiyana (2003:22) successful strategic planning, in higher education, is inclusive, allowing every major stakeholder e.g. students, academic staff administrative staff and service staff an opportunity to participate

and more importantly to buy-in. Successful strategic planning involves ‘top-down’ and bottom-up’ input. In the end strategic planning must receive the endorsement of the senate, the institutional forum and the governing council.

According to Magus Consulting LLC 2010, most organisations put stakeholders at the end of the strategic plan process, as targets in the communications plan after all the thinking have been done. However, Magus Consulting LLC 2010 observes that in the new world, where employee and customer blogs can have more influence than official blog, the traditional approach of putting stakeholders at the end of the process is ineffective.

Balogun and Johnson (2004) suggest that an effective modern university is likely to involve all key stakeholders in the development and implementation of strategy and policy. Academics should be at the heart of planning and decision making in their organisation and be encouraged to contribute on a systematic basis to achieve effective educational and research outcomes for their organisation. It follows then, that academics have a responsibility to become more active participants within their organisations and can no longer afford to be at arm’s length from decision making.

Graham (2005:24) emphasizes that key stakeholders are the base on which successful strategy is built. This author indicates further that the whole process of developing strategy becomes more manageable when you break organizations’ environment into identifiable key stakeholders. According to Rowley and Sherman (2001) strategic planning is a process that is challenging in and of itself. Binbaum (as quoted by Rowley and Sherman (2001)) indicates that one of the most effective methods of assuring campus-wide acceptance of major strategic decision is to ensure that everyone has a voice and that the voice is heard as part of the overall system of strategic planning.

Balogun and Johnson (2004) indicate that many stakeholders are concerned about the value provided by colleges and universities. Although there has been an effort to call attention to the issue and to examine select educational process, there is a dire need to address all aspects of the university/college administrators understand the critical aspects of identifying, defining, managing and delivering superior value to all stakeholders of the institution.

Balogun and Johnson (2004) further provide a university planning process model for incorporating value in the strategic planning process of any university. The authors further state that the universities are faced in increasing pressure to reduce the churn rate of students and increase retention. Also, it is expected that the universities' focus must shift toward attracting students who fit with the value proposition (delivery) of the institution.

According to Rowley, Lujan, Dolence (1997: 58), the contribution and value of stakeholders' engagement at the colleges and universities is not new nor is it unique to American universities. While a few institutions enjoy a peaceful administrative process, a lot others are not that lucky. These authors suggest that quite a number of institutions of higher education are currently facing a crisis of confidence by parents, prospective students, alumni, congressional committee, and the media.

2.3 STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Association stakeholders include members, employees, reacted organization, potential partners, suppliers, the public, regulatory bodies and the government. Whether an organisation is working on a strategic plan, policy development, or creating a new program, consultation with key stakeholders is an important factor in achieving ultimate success.

According to Hayward and Ncayiyana (2003) the initial reaction is often, why participate? People usually have to be convinced to serve, and that requires showing them why it is in their interest to do so. Hayward and Ncayiyana (2003) further state that in most cases, the realization that being part of strategic planning process will allow them to help define the institution's future is incentive enough.

The need for participatory planning stems from the university's shared governance model. Within colleges and universities, the major means of production (teaching and research) are the exclusive rights of the faculty, and top-level strategic decision making cannot be adequately accomplished without the advice and consent of professoriate. The faculty can exercise significant veto power over the options available to university administrative leadership (Rowley, Lujan and Dolence, 1997). Finding mechanisms to get faculty involvement at every stage, and particularly at the implementation stage, becomes essential to

success. It should also be noted that faculty can't be "commanded", but have to be willing to voluntarily participate.

According to Logan (2004), the following are some benefits of reaching out to stakeholders through survey, one-on-one meetings and multi-stakeholder consultations:

- Quality input leads to quality decision-making – a broader perspective reduces “group think”,
- Helps to challenge traditional thinking, and sparks creativity in problem solving,
- Greater stakeholder satisfaction with the final planning product comes from their involvements in shaping it,
- The chances of successful implementation increase as more stakeholders feel committed to the plan or project's goals and take ownership of the plan's design
- Good governance, transparency and open communication are served when Boards communicate and receive feedback from stakeholders, instead of being guided by personal agenda.

Hayward (2008) suggests that student participation is important for the success of the university's strategic planning. In some cases, the students' representatives are elected leaders of the student body. In other cases they were chosen by senior administrators, in a few, they were chosen by the student council. The reaction of some students' leaders and vice chancellor to suggestion that students be part of the planning process was negative in those cases where there was no such radiation. On the whole, students contributed positively to the process, provided important ideas to the strategic planning committee and offered feedback to the student community. This was especially true in South Africa, where participation at both the institutional and national levels was critical to success.

Binbaum (1991) suggests that one of the most effective methods of assuring campus wide acceptance of major decisions is to ensure that everyone has a voice and that that voice is heard seriously as part of the overall system of strategic planning. Many authors in the area of organizational behaviour tout the importance of participation in major decision-making activities in an organization. Binbaum (1991) was one of the authors who particularly targeted university campuses as being important venues within which participation occurs. In

order to attract students, energize alumni, entice donors, and retain higher calibre faculty, the university must be perceived by each key stakeholder group as providing value in their relationship.

According to Logan (2004) it is important that the strategic planning process be highly participatory to ensure broad input, mobilize support for goals, help pave the way for implementation, and give the plan legitimacy. He further mentions that getting broad participation is not necessarily easy. In most developing countries there is little if any experience with broad-based committee that include administrators, faculty members, and staff. Student involvement is especially rare. Logan (2004) advises that the organisations don't have to consult with stakeholders just to say they did. If the organisations include the stakeholders on their strategic planning process, it must be because it is willing to include their point of view and intend consultation to result in change or a new direction.

2.4 IMPORTANCE OF STAKEHOLDERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN

According to Hayward and Ncayiyana (2003:22) successful strategic planning is inclusive, allowing major stakeholder, management, teaching and research staff, support staff, student, the council and other interested parties and stakeholders an opportunity to participate. Successful strategic planning is not an exclusive function of the strategic planning committee. Effective participation of all institutional sectors in the strategic planning process is most often linked to the combined effort of the vice-chancellor and the chair or head of the strategic planning committee.

Hayward and Ncayiyana (2003) argues that getting broad participation in the strategic planning process is not necessarily easy. In most developing countries there is little experience of broad-based committees that include administrators, faculty members, and staff. Students' involvement in strategic planning is especially rare. People usually have to be convinced to serve, and that requires showing them why it is in their interest that being part of the strategic planning process will allow them to help define the institution's future. Experience also suggests that students' participation is important to success. In South Africa, the students' participation at both the institutional and national level was critical to success.

Thomas (1980) argues that there are no *specific* considerations of the higher education customer than the stakeholders. He emphasises the importance of “stakeholders” in the strategic planning process, by suggesting that the University’s survival depend on the terms that are consistent with stakeholders. He further argues that it is the existence of certain stakeholders which gives higher education its unique problem regarding the issue of students being both customers and products simultaneously. According to Lovelock and Rothschild (1980) students are not only consumers of educational services but they are also a product of the institution in the eyes of third parties such as employers.

According to Hayward and Ncayiyana (2003:29) there should be pre-launch consultations on the strategic planning. Hayward and Ncayiyana indicate further that the Vice-chancellor is expected to undertake consultations with a broad spectrum of institutional leaders representing major areas of the campus community, including the faculty, staff, students and council, prior to making a formal announcement regarding the launching of strategic planning process. This consultation phase is most successful if it involves discussions about the importance of the strategic planning exercise to the operations, efficiency and the future of the institutions. This process is most effective if the Vice-Chancellor commits to open a broad discussion of issues and potential changes that facilitate the growth of at least some priority programmes. Hayward and Ncayiyana conclude that the Vice Chancellor is also expected to indicate the potential to modify or eliminate programmes that are no longer appropriate for the institution’s mission or relevant to the needs of stakeholders.

Participation is a key issue in strategic research and practice. While there is no consensus on the degree to which organizational members should participate in strategy formulation, most scholars agree that a lack of participation easily leads to poorly developed strategies (Floyd and Wooldridge 2008), dissatisfaction among those who are excluded, and consequent difficulties in implementation (Mintzberg 1994). While a lack of participation is not always a problem in organizations, it is widely acknowledged that a lack of engagement often tends to decrease the quality of strategic planning and create various kinds of problems for the implementation of strategic plans (Balogun and Johnson 2004; and Laine and Vaara 2007; Floyd and Wooldridge 2008).

According to Hax and Majluf (1996), universities should encourage active participation of as many people as possible, including the faculty, administration, students and alumni, engaging them in the on-going dialogue and involving them in the strategic planning process in order to generate a feeling of ownership of the process and the outcomes throughout the university.

2.5 BENEFITS OF STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

Hax and Majluf (1996:3) confirm that engaging stakeholders in strategic planning process benefits universities in a variety of ways. It creates a framework of determining the direction a university should take to achieve its desired future. It also provides a framework for achieving competitive advantage and allows all university constituencies to participate and work together towards accomplishing goals. The stakeholder involvement raises the vision of all key participants, encouraging them to reflect creatively on the strategic direction of the University. That allows the dialogue between the participants improving understanding of the organisation's vision and fostering a sense of ownership of the strategic plan, and belonging to the organisation. When Stakeholders are involved in the strategic planning, it allows the university to set the priorities in terms of its strategic objectives.

Hayward and Ncayiyana (2003) suggests that one of the vital aspects of strategic planning is to focus attention and thinking on the academic strengths of the institution that would promote excellence and meet national needs in the future. He further mentions that the strategic planning requires discussion, which includes representatives of all institutional stakeholders, about the mission, vision and goals of the institutions, prioritisation of goals and thoughtful reflection about the future. He argues that the successful strategic planning should result in an enhanced institutional focus for all stakeholders.

According to Paris (2003) the stakeholders involvement in the strategic planning creates external advocacy for the organization. Employers, for example are much more likely to support an educational initiative such as a new degree program, or a revamped curriculum if they have a first-hand role in a well-designed planning process. Paris (2003) further confirms that stakeholders' involvement in the strategic planning process can contribute greatly to employees' commitment to mutual goals and a sense of organizational unity. The institution

or department receives valuable feedback both on successful efforts and on areas where improvements should be made.

2.6 UNDERSTANDING STRATEGIC PLANNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

According to Hayward and Ncayiyana (2003:3) the fundamental purpose of the strategic planning in higher education is to provide an on-going process of examination and evaluations of institution's strengths, weaknesses, goals, resources requirements and future prospects, and to set out a coherent plan to respond to the findings and build stronger, more effective institutions. In line with the on-going, strategic planning has been defined as 'a conscious process by which an institution assesses its current state and the likely future condition of its environment, identifies possible future state for itself, and then develops organised strategies, policies, and procedures for selecting and getting to one or more of them' (Hayward and Ncayiyana 2003:3).

Rowley and Sherman (2001) state that strategic planning is a process that is challenging in and of itself. Unfortunately, implementing the strategic planning has presented its own set of highly complex issues. In higher education, many authors have already identified that the strategic planning process is even more complex, and that implementation is seldom successful.

According to Pfeiffer, Goodstein and Nolan (2002) strategic planning is the process by which the guiding members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedure and operations to achieve that future. Strategic planning is aimed at engaging with work groups to envision the future and manage the inevitable changes caused by economic conditions, leadership, student patient, or departmental needs and technology. It assists organisations to help shape the future, rather than simply prepare for or adapt to the future. It also looks very carefully at the current performance and allows for analysis of the gaps between the present and the envisioned future. Because all levels of staff and faculty are to be included in this process, all tasks and positions are open to evaluation.

According to Hayward and Ncayiyana (2003:27), in institutions of higher learning, the composition of the institutional strategic planning committee which may be chaired by the Vice-Chancellor is crucial. The strategic planning committee should include senior

management, usually the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Finance and someone involved in institutional research or data management, senior member/s of the teaching staff, senior staff, students and representatives of Alumni or community if appropriate to the institution. The Council should be briefed regularly about the progress and direction for the strategic planning committee (Hayward and Ncayiyana 2003:27).

According to Rowley, Lujan, Dolence (1997:14) strategic planning is a formal process designed to help a university identify and maintain an optimal alignment with the most important elements the environment, within which the university resides.” This environment consists of “the political, social, economic, technological, and educational ecosystems, both internal and external to the university.

Hayward (2008) confirms that setting the stage for strategic planning can be difficult even after overcoming the question, of why the planning has to take place at all. Change will not take place without the general recognition within the university community that it is necessary. Part of the process of strategic planning is to get people to recognize the need for change. This requires involvement in the planning process by the entire community, deans, faculty members, staff, student, board members, and in some cases, members of the public. People must understand why change is needed – the institution faces critical challenges, its graduates are not competitive, and the training it provides does not meet international expectations. An effective strategic planning committee with broad representation can help make the case for a desirable change.

According to Hayward and Ncayiyana (2003) strategic planning is a dynamic process requiring a high standard of future-focused thinking on the part of those involved in the planning process. Among the keys to strategic planning success at an institutional level are the following: Creativity and viability of the vision, mission and goals developed for the future, commitment of the institutional’ leadership to the plan, extent to which the vision is communicated, understood and shared by institutional leadership and member, scope and depth of analysis involved, relationship of the plan to budget, human capacity and environmental realities.

Strategic planning is a means of establishing major direction for the university, college / school or department. Through strategic planning, resources are concentrated in a limited

number of major directions in order to maximize benefits to stakeholders, those we exist to serve and who are affected by the choices we make. In higher education, those stakeholders include: students, employers of graduate, funding agencies, and society as well as internal stakeholders such as faculty and staff. Strategic planning is a structured approach to anticipating the future and “exploiting the inevitable”. The strategic plan should chart the board course for the entire institution for the next five years. It is a process of ensuring that the budget dollars follows the plan rather than vice versa. Strategic planning is not just a plan for growth and expansion.

According to Paris (2003) effective strategic planning can accrue many benefits to the organization. First, it enables the organization to be proactive and to actively shape its own destiny. Because the process requires attention to trends and external developments, an educational institution or department is less likely to be taken by surprise by a new problem or development.

According to Rowley, Lujan, Dolence (1997) strategic planning is a formal process designed to help a university identify and maintain an optimal alignment with the most important elements the environment within which the university resides. This environment consists of “the political, social, economic, technological, and educational ecosystem, both internal and external to the university”

Paris (2003) states that a major benefit of strategic planning in higher education institutions is that it can lend stability to the organisation in spite of increasingly frequent leadership changes. Simmons and Pohl (1994) found that from 1980 to 1994 at the University of Wisconsin Madison, the average dean’s tenure was five years. He further noted that the average length of leadership tenure was declining sharply with each year. His observation was that: strategic planning creates a broad decision-making group by actively involving middle and operational levels of management. By pushing decision-making down, a system for strategic planning can help the organization maintain a core purpose during times of changing leadership.

Simmons and Pohl (1994) also point that a broadly-based participative strategic planning process can actually make the most of the frequent leadership changes by coupling a new

leader's external perspective with a stable core internal group that is committed to mutual goals and a shared vision of a successful future.

According to Benjamin and Carroll (1998) universities are driven to engage in a strategic planning process by a variety of forces. These include: increasing demand for higher education concurrent with a decline in government funding, changing student demographics, and a need to compete with the emerging models of higher education while keeping the essence of a traditional comprehensive university. A strategic planning process can help prepare a university to face these emerging challenges.

According to Benjamin and Carroll (1998:3), if current trends continue, more than one third of the California seeking to enrol in a "state University will be unable to do so by the year 2015". Consequently to avoid such customs, universities need to "make major structural changes in their decision making systems and reallocate scarce resources" (Benjamin and Carroll, 1998:21). Universities should also "pursue greater mission differentiation to streamline their services and better respond to the changing needs of their constituencies" (Benjamin and Carroll, 1998:22). Strategic planning can aid the university in accomplishing these tasks.

According to Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997), during the past decade institutions of higher education had to confront numerous changes in their external and internal environment and respond to emerging challenges, such as decreasing financial support, rapid technological advances, changing demographics, and out-dated academic programmes. As a result universities engaged in strategic planning as means to "make beneficial, strategic changes to adapt to the rapidly shifting environment.

According to Glassman and Rossy (undated) Institutions of higher education that do not rethink their roles, responsibilities, and strategic planning can expect a very difficult time in the next decade and the next generation, some will not survive.

2.7 THE MODELS IN WHICH STRATEGIC PLANNING ARE DEVELOPED

The following models are a foundation upon which the subsequent strategic planning models were developed. These models were created for the business world. However, many universities have found them to be useful, and were able to adopt them not only to their specific needs, but to needs of higher education in general.

2.7.1 SWOT Analysis Model

The SWOT analysis identifies factors that may affect desired future outcomes of the organization. The SWOT model is based on identifying the university's internal strengths and weaknesses, and threats and opportunities of the external environment, and consequentially identifying the institution's distinctive competencies and key success factors. These, along with considerations of societal and company values, lead to creation, evaluation and choice of suitably-fitted strategy. SWOT's objective is to recommend strategies that ensure the best alignment between the external environment and internal situation (Hax and Majluf, 1996; CSUN, 1997; Hill and Jones, 1992).

SWOT analysis is usually presented in the following form:

Figure 2.1
SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

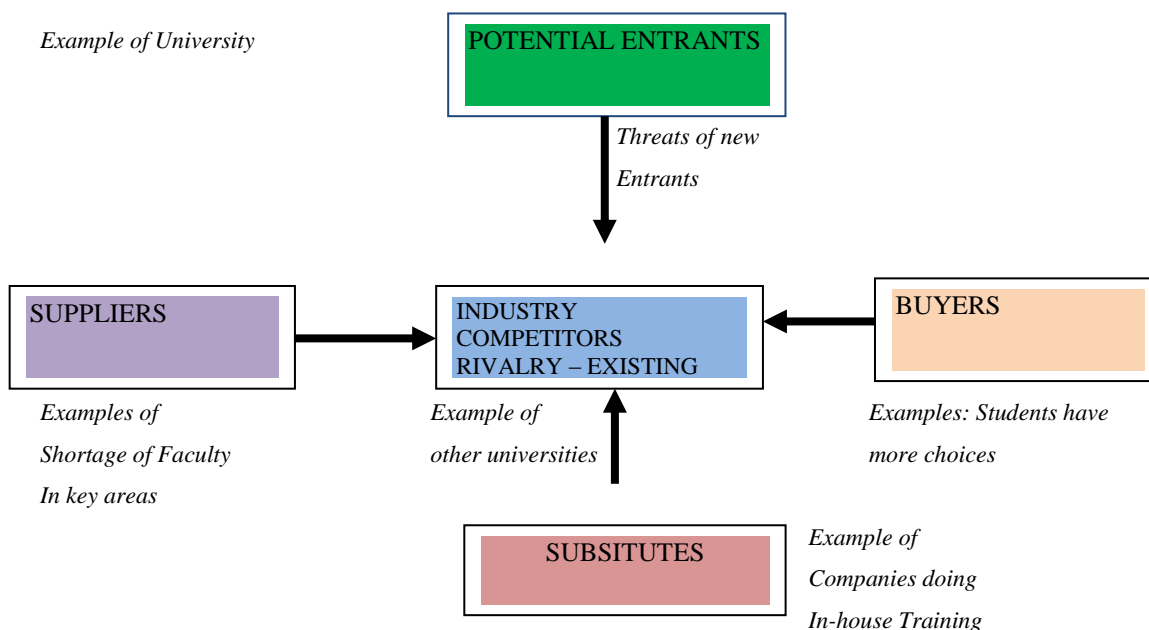
Source: Hax and Majluf, 1996: 27

2.7.2 Porter's Five Forces Model

The five forces model developed by Michael E. Porter guides the analysis of organization's environment and the attractiveness of the industry. The five forces include the rise of new *competitors* entering the industry, threat of potential *substitutes*, the bargaining power of *buyers*, the bargaining power of *suppliers*, and degree of rivalry between the *existing competitors* (Porter, 1985). Environmental scan identifies external opportunities and threats, evaluates institution's overall attractiveness, and identifies factors contributing to, or taking away from, the industry attractiveness (Hax and Majluf, 1996).

The following is a graphical interpretation of Porter's five forces model (Porter, 1985), including examples relevant for higher education:

Figure 2.2
Porter's Five Forces Model



Source: Michael Porter:1985:5

The Porter's five Forces model was created for the business world. However, many universities have found it to be useful, and were able to adopt the model not only to the needs of higher education in general, but to the special needs of specific universities. One of the most important benefits of this model is flexibility and adaptability. It can be used in a variety of ways, using approaches specific to a particular setting.

2.8 UNIVERSITY OF VENDA (UNIVEN) STRATEGIC PLAN

UNIVEN's five-year plan outlines in a succinct manner its commitment to be a quality-driven, financially-sustainable, rural-based comprehensive university (UNIVEN Strategic Plan 2009-2013:3). In 2002, the University of Venda was part of a government-led restructuring of higher education system by which it was identified to become a comprehensive university; that is, a university offering general formative, professional and vocational qualifications.

According to UNIVEN 2009-2013 strategic plan, the University of Venda strategic plan is guided by both internal imperatives (new vision and mission and the statue of the University of Venda) and external imperatives including the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), The South African Paper on Science and Technology (1996), the Higher Education Act (1997), the Education Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (2001), the National Students Financial Aid Scheme Act, Act 56 (1999), the Human Resources Development Strategy (2001), the Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001), the Restructuring of the Higher Education System in South Africa (2002), the new Institutional Landscape for Higher Education in South Africa (2000), the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (2007) and the Higher Education Amendment Act (2008).

2.8.1 The Mission and Vision of the University of Venda

The mission and vision, as presented in the 2009–2013 Strategic Plan, indicate UNIVEN's willingness and commitment "to be at the centre of tertiary education for rural and regional development in Southern Africa" and to be "a comprehensive institution that offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in fields of study which are responsive to the developmental needs of the Southern African region, using appropriate learning methodologies and research" (University of Venda Strategic Plan 2009-2013).

2.8.2 The Strategic Objectives

The Following eight strategic objectives were identified as the cornerstone on which the transformation and developmental agenda of the university will be based for the 2009-2013 strategic plan (University of Venda Strategic Plan 2009-2013).

2.8.2.1 Strategic Objective 1: Conversion to a Comprehensive University

University of Venda has been mandated to become a comprehensive university offering a combination of academic, professional and career-focused programmes at both degree and diploma levels. The university recognises the challenges involved in becoming a comprehensive institution. This requires a fundamental rethinking and restructuring of the curricula given the need to ensure articulation between diploma and degree programmes, changing the traditional academic orientation of the staff and providing the necessary infrastructure and resources. The University of Venda is committed to ensuring that the change in its qualification structure and programme profile is in line with its new vision and mission is done in a manner that builds on existing strengths and does not result in instability.

2.8.2.2 Strategic Objective 2: Quality teaching and learning

The improvement of throughput, graduation and retention rates in higher education is a national priority. A cohort study of the first-time entering undergraduates in 2000 undertaken by the Department of Education indicates that by 2004, in the case of UNIVEN, only 29% graduated, 9% were still enrolled and 62% had dropped out, as against a national average (excluding UNISA) of 40%, 48% and 11% respectively. The University is convinced that a comprehensive range of programmes targeted at both students and staff is required to enhance the quality of teaching and learning which would contribute in the medium-term, to improving the throughput and graduation rates. In this regard, three key interventions are planned. Firstly, the University intends to establish a Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning, which will co-ordinate and drive the development, the Centre will be responsible for developing training programmes, including formal qualifications, in higher education teaching methods, which will cover issues such as curriculum and material design, assessment methods, teaching and learning technologies, including e-learning and classroom research.

2.8.2.3 Strategic Objective 3: Advancing the research and innovation mandate

The development of research, both basic and applied, including the training of future researchers, is a national priority. It is imperative not only to meet national development needs but also to enable South Africa to compete in the global market. Although in terms of staff with doctoral qualifications the University of Venda with 36% is above the national average of 32%, less than 50% of UNIVEN academic staff are currently engaged in research. This resulted in low research outputs, which has remained static at around 20 publication units per year. This translates into 0,07 publications per staff member which is well below the Department of Higher Education and Training's target of 0,25 per staff member. The poor research output is not for want of opportunities given the rural context of the University. The University of Venda is confident that its research strategy will in the medium-to-long-term contribute to enhancing the quality of its teaching and development of sustainable rural development strategy for the province of Limpopo.

2.8.2.4 Strategic Objective 4: Integration of community engagement in the core business of the University

The White Paper 3, A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997a) encourages higher education institutions to develop academic programmes that are responsive to the social, political, economic and cultural needs of communities. In 2009 the University of Venda established a new directorate for community engagement, to ensure that a qualitative, symbiotic and reciprocal relationship exists between itself and its community stakeholders. Community engagement at UNIVEN thus entails goal oriented reciprocal interaction, collaboration and partnerships between the university and rural communities, including on-sites for experiential and service learning. Community engagement at the University of Venda will be scholarship-based and embedded in the academic work of the institution. The focus will be placed on developing a policy framework, initiating and maintain viable community-based projects, successful community-based partnerships, active and visible participatory research and a social responsive curriculum.

2.8.2.5 Strategic Objective 5: Financial Sustainability

The University of Venda is financially stable. This is the result of prudent financial management that was introduced as part of the Council's recovery plan. The University

intends to build on this stability, which has enabled it to generate a moderate annual surplus, to ensure its financial sustainability in the long-term. The University of Venda is of confident that the successful implementation of the strategic objectives will enable it to expand its income stream, in particular, the government subsidy through improved throughput and graduates rates and research outputs. The focus in the next five years would be to ensure that UNIVEN remains on a strong financial footing, delivers unqualified annual financial statements, loans to a minimum, optimise investments and attracts capital both from the public and private sectors.

2.8.2.6 Strategic Objective 6: Integrated human resource management and development

The availability of well-qualified, competent and committed staff – academic, administrative and management, is critical to enable the University of Venda to successfully meet its goals and objectives. The University of Venda faces challenges because it is located in rural areas; the University has difficulties in attracting and retaining well-qualified staff. Due to the fact that historically, as a ‘homeland’ institution, the development of high quality teaching and research programme was not a priority. This has resulted in inertia and the inability and in some cases, unwillingness of staff to rise to the challenges flowing from the context of the post-1994 policy environment. Because of its status as a ‘homeland’ university, merit and competence were not always the main criteria used in the recruitments and selection of staff. The University is faced with the dual challenge of putting in place policies and procedures that would contribute to maximising the effectiveness and productivity of all the staff while recognising the need for a supportive environment, which provides opportunities for staff development.

2.8.2.7 Strategic Objective 7: Linkages, partnerships and internationalization

Internationalisation of higher education has become an important phenomenon globally among highly-ranked universities. The University of Venda recognises the importance of linkages and partnerships with key stakeholders nationally, regionally and internationally, including other higher education institutions, provincial and national government parastatals and private sector as critical in contributing to enabling the university to address the challenges it faces in giving effect to its strategic objectives. The university intends to

establish an international office that will facilitate interactions between the University and institutions abroad.

2.8.2.8 Strategic Objective 8: Enhancing the quality of student life

The University's role and function in relation to its core constituency, that is, students, is not limited to the formal learning process. The quality of students' experience outside the lecture hall and seminar room is equally important. The academic performance of students is inextricable linked to an environment outside the classroom which is conducive and speaks to the social, emotional, psychological, cultural, recreational, health and housing needs of students. The University recognises that the provisions of these non-academic services were not optimal in the past – they were not well coordinated. In the light of this the University is in the process of restructuring the Student Affairs Directorate to ensure that its operations are professionalised and the quality of service is improved.

2.8.3 The Critical Success Factors

The following six critical success factors were identified as significant and must be simultaneously pursued in order to successfully implement the eight strategic objectives:

2.8.3.1 Critical Success Factor 1: Institutional Planning and Quality Assurance

Planning and quality assurance are interrelated and represent mutually reinforcing activities, which allow the institution to plan for and monitor its performance. This is crucial if the university is to achieve the optimal use of available resources in discharging its core mandate of teaching and learning, research and community engagement. The Directorate for Institutional Planning and Quality Assurance (IPQA) was established and is responsible for developing a framework for academic planning, including enrolment planning, for developing policies and procedures that support institutional planning and quality management for the approval and accreditation of programmes. Producing regular analyses of institutional trends and performance in relation to teaching and learning, research and community engagement; ensuring the integrity of the data collected (i.e. students, staff, programmes, facilities and resources) in line with the requirements of the (national) Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS). In this regard, the university may consider moving the HEMIS function, which currently resides in the Student Academic

Administration Division to the IPQA. There are two reasons for this; - HEMIS captures both staff and student data and data collection is inextricably linked to data analysis, which falls within the ambit of IPQA facilitating strategic planning, including the annual review of the strategic plans.

2.8.3.2 Critical Success Factor 2: Student Academic Administration

The role of the Student Academic Administration Department which is responsible for coordinating, among others, the admissions process, enrolment records, assessment records, administration of examinations and the higher education management information system, is central to achieving a range of strategic objectives linked to the recruitment, selection and retention of students. However, the University recognises that this Department as currently constituted may not be functioning optimally because of the current policies in place. The University is committed to undertake a comprehensive review of all existing policies, procedures and systems relating to student academic administration, which would serve as a basis for revising the policies, procedures and systems to ensure their optimal functioning and effectiveness.

2.8.3.3 Critical Success Factor 3: Physical Planning and Infrastructure Management

To ensure that infrastructure development does not take place in an ad-hoc fashion based on the availability of resources at a particular point in time, the University has developed a comprehensive plan to improve infrastructure and facilities. The process has been categorised in four distinct phases, Recovery Plan 2005/2007, critical infrastructure 2007/10, Medium Term Infrastructure 2011/2015 and Master Plan Infrastructure 2016/2025.

2.8.3.4 Critical Success Factor 4: Information Communication Technology (ICT) in support of the University's Core Business

The Information Communication Technology (ICT) services department envisions a university community that is supported by the best available technology, both hardware and software, that is based on best practices. The technology infrastructure must support the use and sharing of all kinds of information: text, data, image, video and voice. The current state of ICT infrastructure and services at the University of Venda still lags behind other public universities in South Africa. Most students do not have access to computing because there are

limited computers and limited access in the laboratories. It should be noted that UNIVEN has several computer laboratories in various schools that are network ready, but without computers. There is no 24/7 open computer laboratory for students and limited UNIVEN email service for students. No e-learning services are possible due to lack of computers. Several more servers are required and among these, are servers for students and staff services, software update services, antivirus services and for network management.

2.8.3.5 Key Success Factor 5: Library and Academic Information Services

The University of Venda recognises that critical to the effective execution of its core business, that is, teaching, learning, research, and community engagement, is the effective provision and facilitation of access to information. The library develops and manages local and remote access to information and knowledge resources through its professional expertise and in this way offers a range of library and information resources. Much has been achieved to deliver a modern library and information service but there is a need to continue building on current achievements. The library is already hybrid, existing as both a physical and virtual entity that offers its information resources in physical and electronic form.

2.8.3.6 Key Success Factor 6: Strategic Communication and Marketing

The University recognises that the key challenge it faces in its endeavour to re-engineer and restructure itself in response to the demands of a changing national and regional environment and to successfully realise its new vision and mission is to challenge and change its public perception which has been coloured by the University's apartheid designed homeland past, as well as its travails post 1994. The University has restructured its Public Relations and Development Division to enable it to develop a proactive communications and marketing strategy, which will position it as an institution at the cutting edge of teaching, learning and research in the context of rural development. Given its location, focus and demographics, the University is well-placed to contribute meaningful strategies that are relevant to the economic growth and developmental needs facing rural poor agrarian communities. Institutional values and SWOT analysis were also outlined in the 2009-2013 strategic plan of the University of Venda.

In conclusion the University of Venda's 2009-2013 strategic plan intend to improve the quality of the lives of both staff and students with a view of ensuring that outputs in terms of

pass rates, throughput rates, graduation rates and research outputs improve in line with the national average norms.

2.9 THE STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA STRATEGIC PLAN

The University of Venda strategic plan was approved by the University of Venda Council in 2009 and it was adopted as a working document. The University of Venda internal stakeholders were represented in the development of 2009-2013 strategic plan. Representatives from students' leadership, service staff, administrative staff, academic staff and senior management were involved and participated in the 2009-2013 UNIVEN strategic plan. They had strategic planning committee which met according to their own plans. After due consultations with internal stakeholders the draft strategic plan was completed and circulated to the campus community for further inputs because it is vital that the final version of the strategic plan represent the best thinking on the campus. The strategic plan committee submitted the final draft for approval by relevant governance structures, such as senate, institutional forum, management and council. All internal stakeholders were represented in the governance structure. The University of Venda 2009-2013 strategic plan was finally approved by university council and it is now a working document.

2.10 ASSUMPTION ON THE LACK OF STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

In August 2010 external consultants were contracted to conduct a strategic review workshop. All staff members were invited and scheduled to attend the workshop. Upon attending the workshop it was revealed that almost 80% of staff members were not aware of the strategic plan document. Though all structures were represented, it seemed only members of senior management, and the representatives of trade unions understood the concept of strategic planning but the majority of staff members at large, more especially those who are at lower and middle classes were not aware of the strategic planning. That revealed the fact that the representatives were not giving proper feedback to their constituency or proper consultation or involvement were not done by management. The fact that some of the representatives have knowledge about the strategic planning was also a concern. The strategic plan document is written and published in English, and the majority of service staff cannot read

and write English. The majority of lower level staff felt excluded in the plan because they do not even understand the language hence the content.

2.11 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the literature review in this chapter aims to complement the rationale behind this study. In accordance with the aims of the study, understanding the stakeholders participation in the strategic plan, stakeholders participation in the strategic plan and the importance of the stakeholders participation in the strategic have been discussed. Furthermore the benefits of stakeholders' involvement in the strategic plan have been outlined. Understanding of strategic plan in higher education and strategic plan model and framework were discussed. The University of Venda strategic plan was discussed and the stakeholders' involvement at the University of Venda was discussed. And finally the assumption on the lack of stakeholders' involvement at the University of Venda was discussed.

The following chapter (chapter 3) deals with the research methodology, which discusses how data was collected and analysed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two presented the literature review regarding the understanding of the stakeholders' involvement in the strategic planning. This chapter describes the research design and methodology used in this study, which include population, data collection, validity, reliability, and ethical considerations. The study investigated the stakeholders' involvement in the University of Venda's strategic planning.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design and methodology of this study are discussed in this section.

3.2.1 Research design

The design of this research is an empirical survey which is quantitative in nature. Struwig and Stead (2003:4) refer to quantitative research as a form of conclusive research involving large representative samples and fairly structured data collection procedures. Self-administered structured questionnaires were used to collect data to establish the experience and knowledge of employees and students regarding the stakeholders' involvement in the strategic planning of the University of Venda.

3.2.2 Research methodology

The research methodology of this study consisted of the methods of sample selection, data collection and analysis. These are discussed in detail in this section.

3.2.2.1 Sample

The sample of this study was selected as follows:

- **The target population**

According to Saunders (2003) a research population is defined as a full set of cases from which a sample is drawn. The target population of this study consisted of the university

population which includes academics, administrative, service staff, students and management staff. The population included respondents from the age of 17 years irrespective of gender, physical ability, race, and culture.

- **Study sample**

A non-probability sampling technique, judgemental procedure, was used to purposefully select the respondents. Respondents were selected from each of the management components so that every level is represented. For the purpose of this study, the sample was selected using quota sampling procedure. The following were selected: 30 of senior management, 30 of academic staff, 30 administrative, 30 of service staff and 30 of students' representatives (to a total of 150).

3.2.2.2 Data collection

Questionnaires were used as a data collection instrument in this study. Creswell (2003:13) consider questionnaires as the most viable research method as they are cost-effective and they can be administered within a short period of time without compromising the validity and reliability of the research. By using questionnaires, it is easy to access respondents and capture data in a more precise and effective way. Scaled close-ended questions have been used in this questionnaire to obtain data from respondents. Respondents were requested to choose only one answer from those given for each of the items in the questionnaire. According to Blanche and Durrheim (1999:295), closed-ended questions are designed to enable respondents an opportunity to select one or more choices from a fixed list of answers provided. As described by Trochim (2005:1), the Likert scale questionnaires are described by as an un-dimensional scaling method which measures the extent to which a person agrees or disagrees. All items were closed-ended questions, using a Likert scale from which respondents indicated whether they strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree or strongly disagree with each of the statements. The Likert scale questionnaires were designed and administered to measure the extent to which the participants respond to issues relating to the involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of the University of Venda's strategic plan. Before administering the questionnaires, the researcher conducted a pilot study, comprising the targeted stakeholders, namely the academic staff, administrative staff, service staff, students and management staff. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:307) pilot test can be successful in

identifying needed changes if as few as ten individuals are willing to complete it and provide suggestion to improve clarity and format. The researcher wanted to ensure that the research questions can be answered by all groups with ease. Through pilot study, the researcher reviewed and made some amendments to the questions. The researcher further had an opportunity to assess the validity of the questions and the extent of reliability of the data collected.

The researcher distributed 150 self-administered questionnaires to the respondents (senior management, academic staff, administrative staff, service staff and students) 113 (75.3%) questionnaires were returned and captured for analysis. They were collected after four days from the day they were distributed.

3.2.3 Data analysis

Data collected was entered into data editor loaded with the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS, 18), a powerful statistical software which manipulates large amounts of data, finds patterns and tests hypotheses for analysis. Through the frequencies procedure, value labels of each variable as well as all possible summary statistics (i.e. measures of frequencies and frequency percentages) were listed.

Results were given showing frequencies and frequency percentages with the help of tables and graphs.

3.2.4 Validity and reliability

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:180), validity is a judgement of the appropriateness of a measure for specific inferences, decisions, consequences or uses that result from the scores that are generated. Reliability according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:180) refers to the consistency of measurement, the extent to which the scores are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection. Before making use of questionnaires to collect data, the questionnaires were piloted with colleagues and co-workers to enable the researcher to review and make necessary amendments to the questionnaires if the collected data failed to answer the research questions. Through pilot testing, the researcher was able to assess the validity of the questions and the likely reliability of the data collected.

3.2.5 Ethical considerations

The researcher has requested for a permission to conduct the study at the University of Venda from the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic during October 2011 (Appendix A). The researcher informed the respondents of their choice to participate in the study. The respondents were given assurance in writing that their response would be used for study purpose only and that the information they provide would be protected and kept confidential. The respondents signed an informed consent letter before they completed the questionnaire (Appendix C).

3.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the research design and methodology in detail. The researcher developed a structured questionnaire as the data collection instrument designed to obtain responses from the relevant and essential to the research problem. The researcher collected all the information in person and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. In chapter four there will be a discussion and analyses of the findings of this research.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three presented the research design and methodology that was applied in this study. Chapter four focuses on the presentation of the study data. Questionnaire was used as a data collection method. The researcher distributed one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires to the respondents, 113 questionnaires were returned which is 75.3% and regarded as sufficient. In order to ascertain the involvement of the internal stakeholders in the strategic planning of the University of Venda, their level of involvement were measured on a Five Point Likert's Scale.

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

As indicated in the questionnaire, section A represents the biographical information of the respondents. The summary of the result of that section is presented in the following paragraphs. This is intended to refresh readership through a biographical presentation. The section that deals with age categorisation suggests that the majority 57.5% are in the age category of 37 years and older, while 15% are in the age category of 27-31 years, 12,3% are in the age category of 22-26 and 9% are in the age category of 17-21 years. The least number of respondents were in the category of 32-36 years (6,2%). The results reflect that most of the stakeholders fall in the age category of 37 years and older. On the gender category, male participants slightly outnumbered the female participants (in the ratio of (5.1:4.9). The section that presents population groupings indicates that black respondents account for 95%, while white population accounts for the rest percentage. The sample mainly comprises of respondents that hold Post graduate degree 48.7%, followed by 24.4% respondents in possession of First Degree. Only 13.7% have passed Matriculation while 9.7% hold a Diploma. There were only 3.5% of respondents that indicated that they have not passed Matriculation.

Further on the biographical section, the responses generated on the occupational category of the respondents show that 39.8% of the respondents are administrative staff, 22.1% are students, 17.7% are academic staff, while management staff account for 10.6%; followed by

service staff at 9.7%. The analysis also shows that majority of the respondents are new in the University. About 44,4% of the respondents have spent less than five years in the University, while only 12,2% have been working for the University for barely 10 years. More so, about 14.4% have been working in the University for more than 11 years. Also, more than 29% have been working in the University for close to 20 years and above.

Having looked at Section A in the analysis, the following paragraphs present the main research focus, which deals with the stakeholders' participation / involvement in the strategic planning processes at the University of Venda. The analysis flows from the most recent strategic planning, through to the overall strategic planning processes at the University.

4.3 INVOLVEMENT OF STAKHOLDERS IN 2009-2013 UNIVERSITY OF VENDA STRATEGIC PLANNING

Table 4.1
Personal involvement in 2009-2013
University of Venda Strategic Planning

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Involved	50	44.2
Not involved	35	31.0
Represented	28	24.8
Total	113	100.0

Table 4.1 shows that 44,2% of the respondents are involved in the 2009-2013 strategic planning, while 31% of respondents are not involved in the strategic planning. 24,8% of respondents were represented in 2009-2013 University of Venda strategic planning. (Represented – in this regards is referred to the fact that some stakeholders did not take part personally to the strategic planning process, but they authorised or delegated other members to represent them in the strategic planning process).

4.3.1 All stakeholders are invited to participate on strategic plan

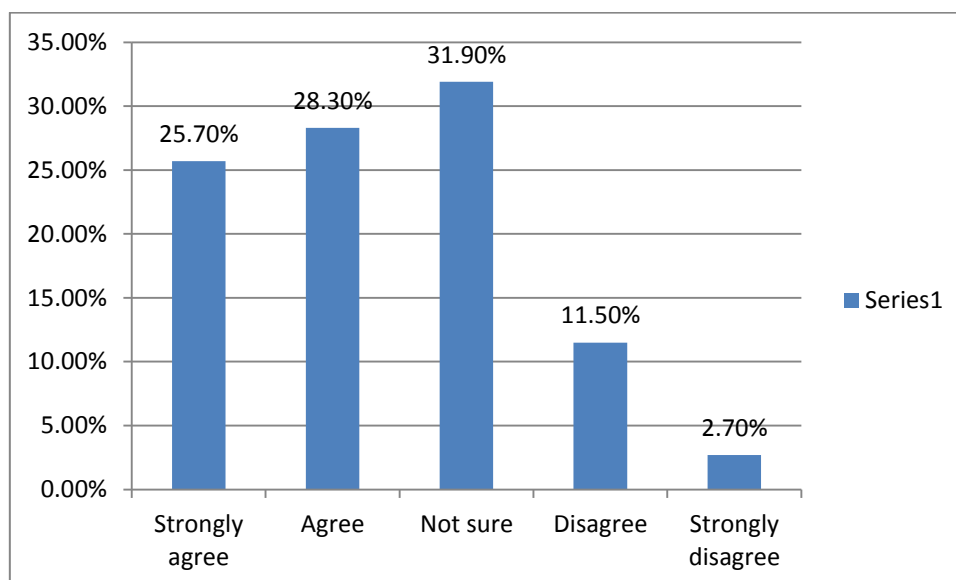
Results showing that stakeholders are invited to participate in the University of Venda strategic plan are shown in Table 4.2

Table 4.2
Stakeholders' participation in the strategic plan

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	29	25.7
Agree	32	28.3
Not sure	36	31.9
Disagree	13	11.5
Strongly Disagree	3	2.7
Total	113	100.0

Table 4.2 indicates that 54% of stakeholders agreed and strongly agreed that they are invited to participate in the strategic planning, while 14.2% of the stakeholders disagreed and strongly disagreed that they are invited to participate in the strategic planning. 31,9% of the stakeholders were not sure that they were invited to participate in the strategic planning. Participation can be clearly shown by means of a diagram that is presented below (figure 4.1):

Figure 4.1
Stakeholders' participation in the strategic plan



4.3.2 Participation of trade unions in the strategic planning process

Results showing that executive members of the trade unions are invited to participate in the strategic plan are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3
Participation of trade unions in the strategic
planning process

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	42	37.2
Agree	49	43.4
Not sure	19	16.8
Disagree	2	1.8
Strongly Disagree	1	.9
Total	113	100.0

Table 4.3 reflects that 80.6% of the respondents indicated that the executive members of university's trade unions are invited to participate in the strategic planning, while 2.7% of the respondents indicated that executive members of the university's trade unions are not invited to participate in the strategic planning, whilst 16,8 of the respondents were not sure.

4.3.3 Workshops are conducted on how to participate in the strategic planning

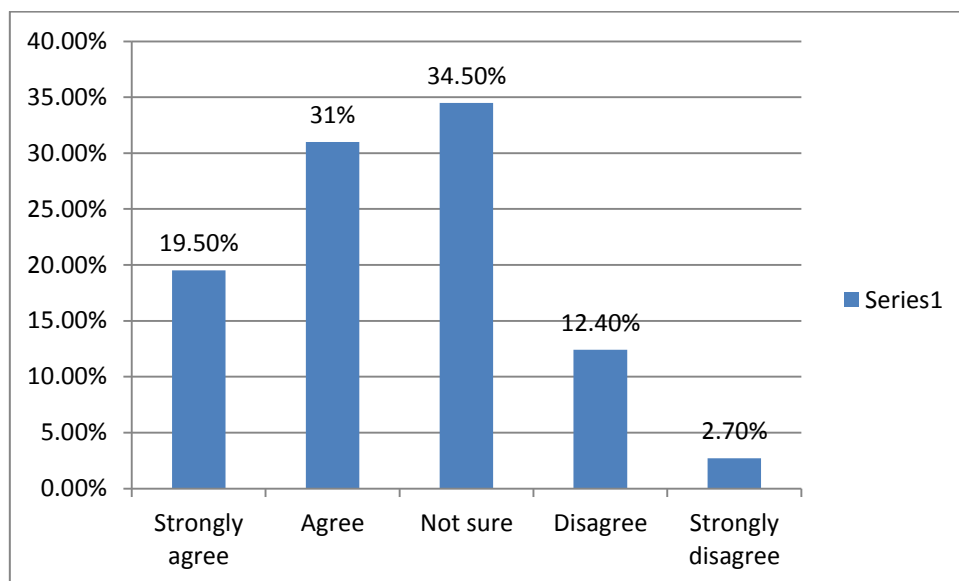
Results showing that workshops are conducted on how to participate in the strategic planning are shown in Table 4.4

Table 4.4
Workshops conducted to all stakeholders on how to
participate in the strategic planning

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	22	19.5
Agree	35	31.0
Not sure	39	34.5
Disagree	14	12.4
Strongly Disagree	3	2.7
Total	113	100.0

Table 4.4 shows that 50,5% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that workshops are conducted to enlighten all stakeholders on how to participate in the strategic planning, while 15, 1% of the respondents disagreed with the proposition that such a workshop took place, and about 35% of respondents are not sure. These results can be clearly observed through the diagram that is presented below (Figure 4.2):

Figure 4.2
Workshops conducted to all stakeholders on how to
participate in the strategic planning



4.3.4 Awareness Campaign conducted to inform all stakeholders about the strategic planning

Results showing that awareness campaign are conducted to inform all stakeholders about the strategic plan is presented in Table 4.5

Table 4.5
Awareness Campaign conducted to inform all stakeholders
about the strategic plan

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	19	16.8
Agree	32	28.3
Not sure	37	32.7
Disagree	18	15.9
Strongly Disagree	7	6.2
Total	113	100.0

Table 4.5 reflects that 45,1% of the respondents agreed that awareness campaigns were conducted to inform all stakeholders about the strategic plan, whereas 22,1% of the respondents disagreed that awareness campaign were conducted to inform all stakeholders about the strategic planning. 32,7% of the respondents were not sure whether the workshops were conducted or not.

4.3.5 External expert invitation to facilitate the strategic planning

Results showing that the external expert is invited to facilitate the strategic plan are shown in Table 4.6

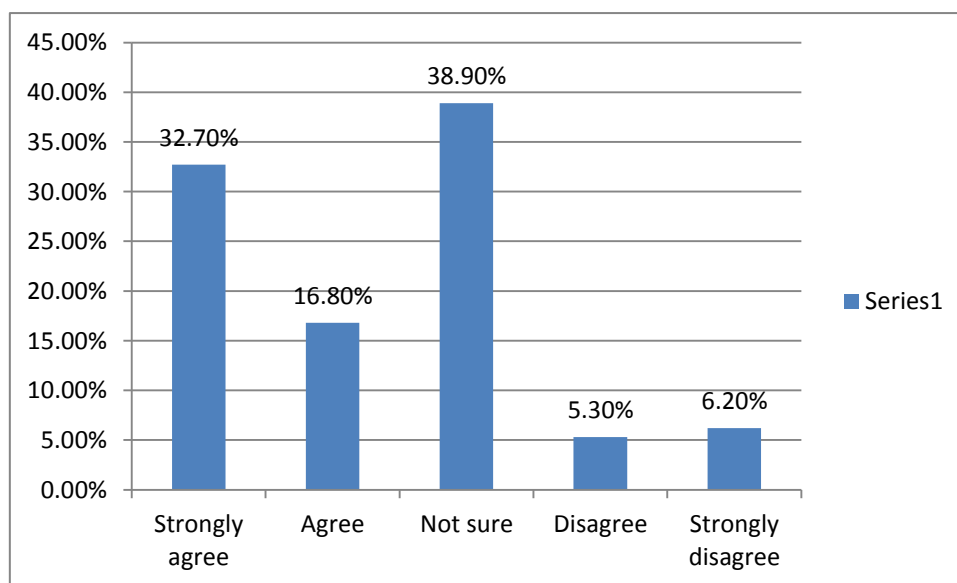
Table 4.6
External Expert invitation to facilitate the strategic plan

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	37	32.7
Agree	19	16.8
Not sure	44	38.9
Disagree	6	5.3
Strongly Disagree	7	6.2
Total	113	100.0

From Table 4.6, 49.5% of the respondents agreed that external expert is invited to facilitate the strategic plan, while 11.5% of the respondents disagreed that the external expert is invited to facilitate the strategic plan. It was observed that 38.9% of the respondents were not sure whether the external expert was invited or not. These results can be clearly illustrated through the diagram that is presented in Figure 4.3:

Figure 4.3.

External Expert invitation to facilitate the strategic plan



4.4 FEEDBACK ON THE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Results showing feedback on strategic planning are given as discussed in this section.

4.4.1 Regular feedback to staff regarding the development of the strategic plan

Results showing regular feedback to staff regarding the development of the strategic plan are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7
Regular feedback to staff

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	17.7
Agree	43	38.1
Not sure	32	28.3
Disagree	13	11.5
Strongly Disagree	5	4.4
Total	113	100.0

Table 4.7 indicates that 55.8% of the staff agreed that they were given feedback regarding the development of the strategic plan; while 15.9% of the respondents expressed that no regular feedback was given to staff regarding the development of the strategic plan.

4.4.2 Regular feedback to students regarding the development of the strategic plan

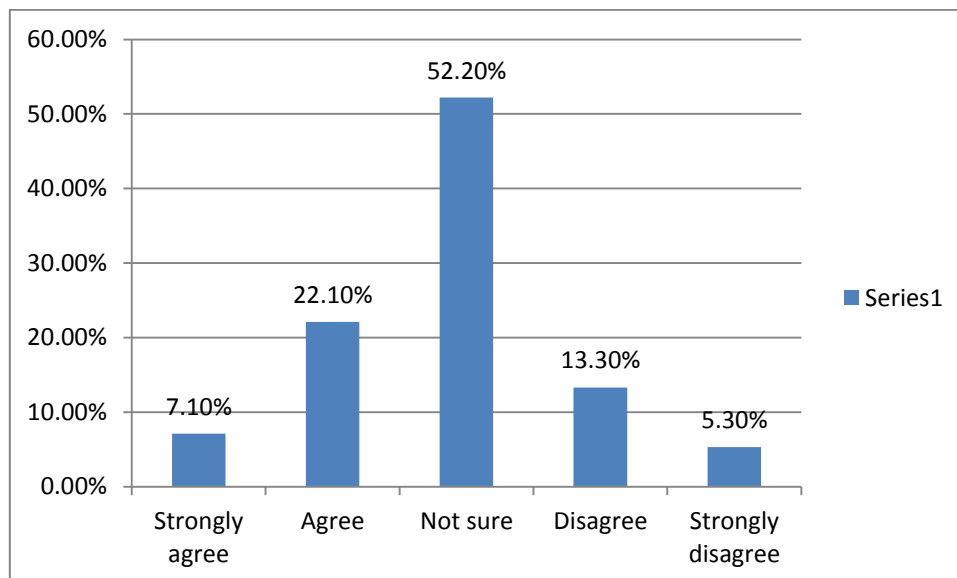
Results showing regular feedback to students regarding the development of the strategic plan are shown in Table 4.8

Table 4.8
Regular feedback to students

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	8	7.1
Agree	25	22.1
Not sure	59	52.2
Disagree	15	13.3
Strongly Disagree	6	5.3
Total	113	100.0

Table 4.8 shows that 29.2% of the students are given regular feedback regarding the development of the strategic plan, whereas 18.6% of the students are not given regular feedback regarding the development of the strategic plan. The majority of the student respondents indicate anonymity, which is an indication of the unpopularity of such a feedback being given. These results can be clearly shown through the use of the graphical presentation given below:

Figure 4.4
Regular feedback to students



4.5 BUDGETS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR THE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Results showing the budget are given and discussed in this section.

4.5.1 Budget for the development of strategic planning

Results showing budget for the development of the strategic planning are shown in Table 4.9. Nearly half (48.7%) of the respondents indicate that the budget is crucial for the development of a strategic plan. The budget concept is important because funding/money might be seen as a challenge regarding the development and implementation of the strategic plan. Most of the activities involved in the development of the strategic plan demand money. The strategic plan cannot be implemented without a budget. New resources, infrastructure, new staff demanded by strategic planning may not be achieved if there is no budget.

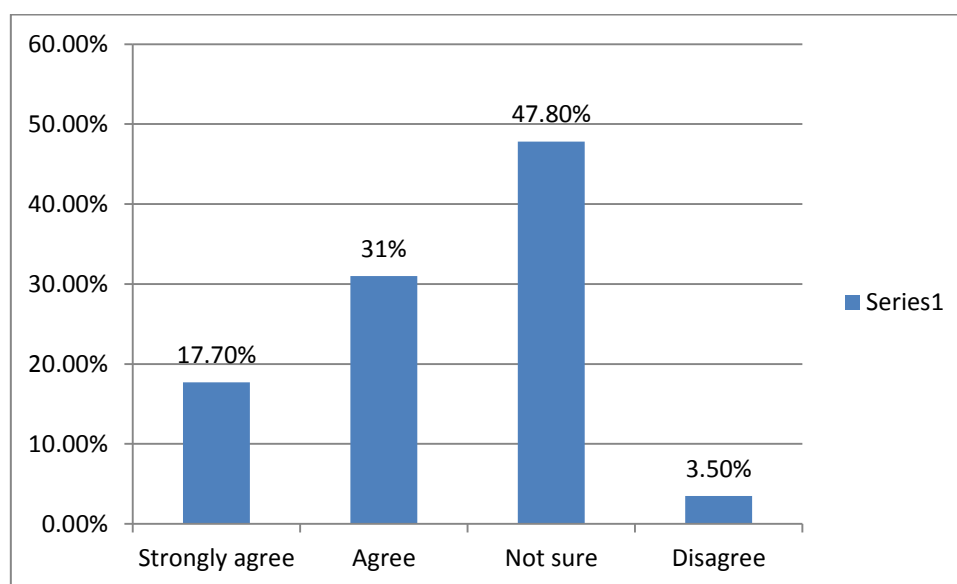
Table 4.9
Budget for the development of the strategic planning

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	17.7
Agree	35	31.0
Not sure	54	47.8
Disagree	4	3.5
Total	113	100.0

Table 4.9 reflects that 48.7% of the respondents agreed that there is a budget for the development of strategic planning, while 3.5% of the respondents disagreed that there is a budget for the development of strategic planning. This result is clearly illustrated through the use of a diagram as depicted below (Figure 4.5):

Figure 4.5

Budget for the development of the strategic planning



4.5.2 Budget for the implementation of the strategic planning

Results showing budget for the implementation of the strategic planning are shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

Budget for the implementation of the strategic planning

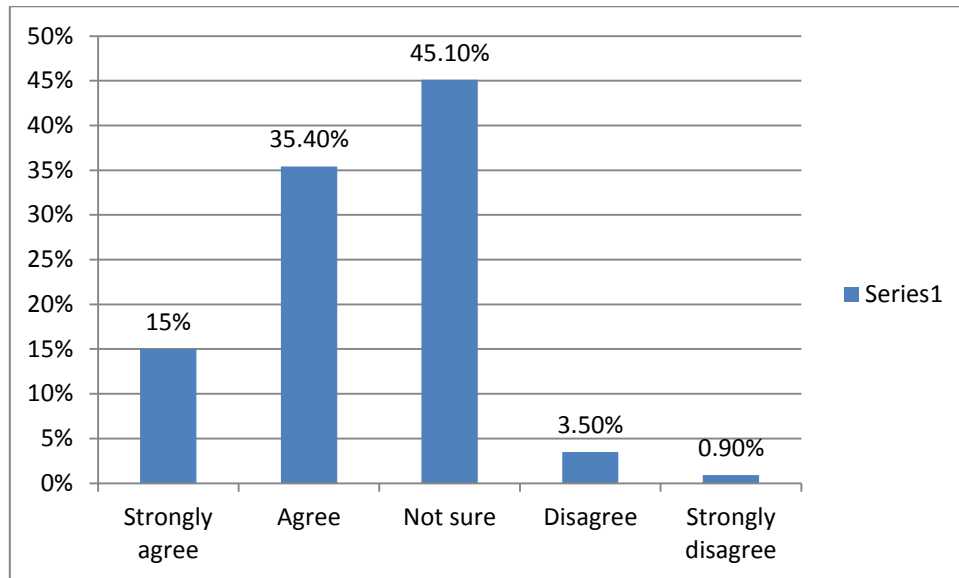
	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	15.0
Agree	40	35.4
Not sure	51	45.1
Disagree	4	3.5
Strongly Disagree	1	0.9
Total	113	100.0

Table 4.10 reflects that 50.4% of the respondents agreed that there is a budget for the implementation of the strategic planning, while 4.4% of the respondents disagreed that there is a budget for the implementation of the strategic planning. It is observed that the majority of

respondents 45.1% are not sure of the budget for the implementation of the strategic planning. The diagram (Figure 4.6) below clearly illustrates the results from the respondents.

Figure 4.6

Budget for the implementation of the strategic planning



4.6 EFFECT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Results showing the effect of stakeholders involvement in the strategic planning are given and discussed in section 4.6.

4.6.1 Involvement of stakeholders in strategic planning has effect on Implementation of Strategic plan

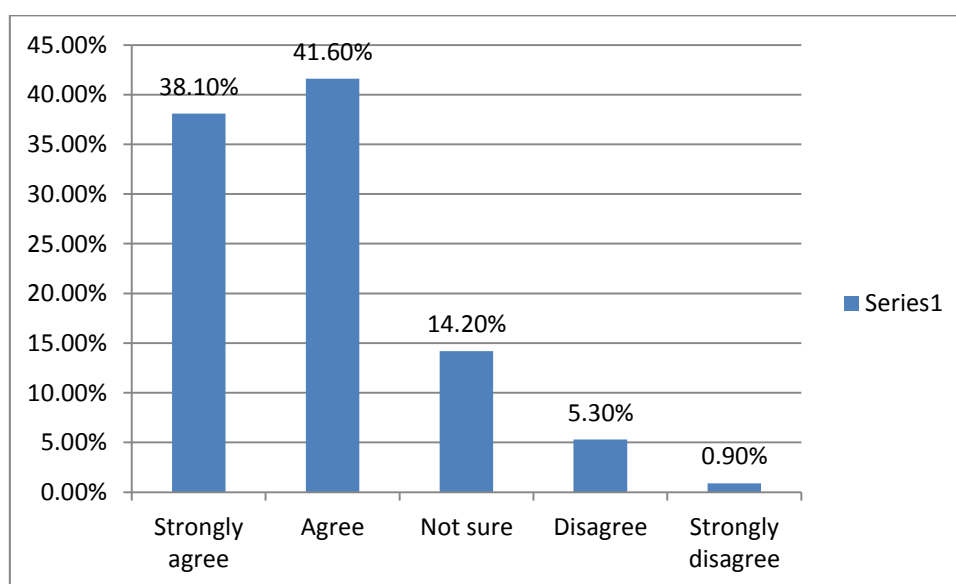
Results showing whether stakeholders' involvement in the strategic planning has effect on implementation of the strategic plan are shown in Table 4.11

Table 4.11
Effect on implementation of the strategic plan

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	43	38.1
Agree	47	41.6
Not sure	16	14.2
Disagree	6	5.3
Strongly Disagree	1	.9
Total	113	100.0

Table 4.11 indicates that 79.7% of the respondents agreed that the involvement of stakeholders in the strategic planning has effect on implementation of strategic plan, while 6.2% of the respondents disagreed that the involvement of stakeholders in the strategic planning has effect of implementation of the strategic plan. This result is represented through a diagram as shown below (Figure 4.7):

Figure 4.7
Effect on implementation of the strategic plan



4.6.2 Involvement of stakeholders in strategic planning has effect on Performance

Results showing whether stakeholder's involvement in the strategic planning has effect on performance are shown in Table 4.12

Table 4.12
Effect on Performance

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	38	33.6
Agree	48	42.5
Not sure	22	19.5
Disagree	5	4.4
Total	113	100.0

In Table 4.12, 76.1% of the respondents agreed that the involvement of stakeholder in strategic planning has effect on performance, while 4.4% of the respondents disagreed that the involvement of stakeholder in the strategic planning have effect on performance. The graphic representation is given below:

4.6.3 Involvement of stakeholders in strategic planning has effect on Buy-in by Stakeholders

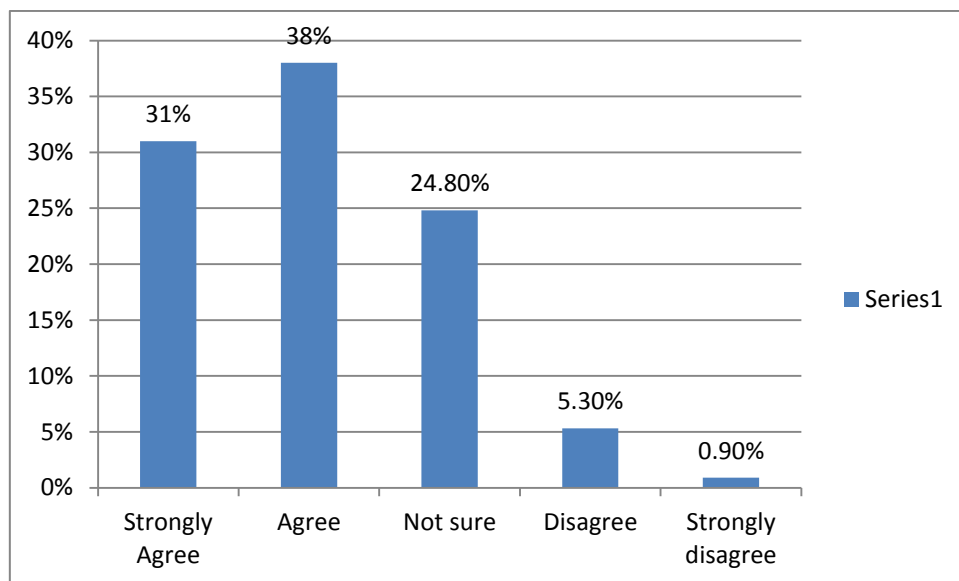
Results showing whether stakeholders' involvement in the strategic planning has effect on buy-in by stakeholders are shown in Table 4.13

Table 4.13
Effect on buy-in by stakeholders

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	35	31.0
Agree	43	38.0
Not sure	28	24.8
Disagree	6	5.3
Strongly Disagree	1	.9
Total	113	100.0

Table 4.13 reflects that 69.1% of the respondents agreed that the involvement of stakeholders in the strategic planning has effect on buy-in by stakeholders, while 6.2% of the respondents disagreed that the involvement of the stakeholders in the strategic planning has effect on buy-in by stakeholders. The result is represented diagrammatically through Figure 4.8, shown below:

Figure 4.8
Effect on buy-in by stakeholders



4.7 COMMUNICATION REGARDING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Results showing communication regarding the strategic plan are given and discussed in this section.

4.7.1 Strategic plan must be communicated to university community

Results showing that the strategic plan must be communicated to the university community are shown in Table 4.14

Table 4.14
Communication on strategic plan

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	91	80.5
Agree	17	15.0
Not sure	4	3.5
Strongly Disagree	1	0.9
Total	113	100.0

Table 4.14 shows that majority of the respondents 95.5% agreed that the strategic plan must be communicated to University community, while the least 0, 9% of the respondents do not agree that the strategic plan must be communicated to the University community. These results can be clearly illustrated through the graph below:

4.8. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher discussed, analysed and interpreted the study results and findings. In the next chapter (chapter 5), the researcher will provide the conclusion of the study research. The researcher will also provide the recommendations for further future research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter four the researcher presented a discussion on the presentation and interpretation of the study results on the stakeholders' involvement in the strategic planning of the University of Venda. Chapter five includes the researcher's interpretation and conclusion from the analysis conducted in chapter four, and a synopsis of the results related to the research problem and the objectives of the study. The researcher also provides recommendations for further research as informed by the scope of this research.

5.2 DISCUSSION AND SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 All stakeholders are invited to participate in the strategic plan

The results reflected that 61 (54%) of the respondents agreed that stakeholders are invited to participate in the strategic planning of the University of Venda. This is very vital for the University since all stakeholders are expected to participate in the strategic planning. Further, out of the 113 respondents, 36 respondents are not sure of whether all stakeholders are invited to participate or not. In future, it may be essential for management cadre to ensure the inclusion of all the stakeholders in the strategic planning session. Interested and affected stakeholders should be invited to participate in the strategic plan. More so, 31,9% of those who are not sure of the invitation put management in a very difficult position because it is an indication that the communication of such an invite is not effective.

5.2.2 Participation of Trade Unions in the strategic planning

The results indicates that 91 (80,6%) of the respondents agreed that members of trade unions participated in the strategic planning process. This is encouraging regarding participation since management has ensured that at least all university trade unions are invited to participate in the strategic plan. Management and strategic planning task team should keep up the good work and maintain the very same standard and possibly improve on this in future.

5.2.3 Workshop are conducted to all stakeholders on how to participate in the strategic plan

The results reflect that 57 (50,5%) of the respondents are satisfied that workshops are conducted to sensitise all stakeholders on how to participate in the strategic planning. This indicates a positive response because it is an evidence that stakeholders are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills on how to participate in the strategic planning, since some of the stakeholders do not hold strategic positions, it is important for them to attend the workshops in order for them to be enlightened on strategic planning issues.

Whereas 39 (34,5%) are not sure and 17 (15,1) disagree that workshops have been conducted prior to the strategic planning, this again poses a negative situation to the university management, because it is their duty to ensure that all stakeholders are equipped on strategic planning matters before the commencement of the strategic planning in order for the stakeholders to gain insight on the strategic planning matters. It is therefore recommended that in future, management should strive for all stakeholders to attend the strategic planning workshops for the smooth running and positive participation on the strategic planning process.

5.2.4 Awareness campaign are conducted to inform all stakeholders about the strategic plan

Of the 113 respondents 37 (32,7%) were not sure of the awareness campaign, and 25 (22,1%) disagreed that the awareness campaign were conducted prior to the commencement of the strategic plan. Whereas 51 (45,1%) of the respondents agreed that the awareness campaign are conducted prior to the strategic planning. This is an evidence that there is lack of awareness campaign to inform stakeholders about the strategic plan.

It is recommended that management should make sure that in future, awareness campaign are conducted to remind all stakeholders about the process of the strategic planning. This can be done by addressing all staff and students, categorically on different days and places on issues pertaining to strategic planning prior to the commencement of the planning sessions.

5.2.5 External experts are invited to facilitate the strategic plan

The results indicate that 44 (38,9%) of the respondents were not sure if the external expert is invited to facilitate the strategic plan and 13 (11,5) did not agree that the expert is invited to facilitated the strategic plan. However 56 (49,5%) of the respondents agreed that the external expert is invited to facilitate the strategic plan. This is evidence that most of the stakeholders did not take part in the strategic planning, because it was during the strategic planning session that the participants interacted with the external expert who facilitated the strategic plan. The fact that the majority were neither sure nor agree, indicates that there is a lack of participation or feedback by those who represent the stakeholders in the strategic planning.

It is recommended that in future management staff and the strategic planning task team should ensure that feedback is provided to the stakeholders who are represented in the strategic plan. Either by inviting all stakeholders or by giving feedback to individuals, irrespective of whether their representative gave feedback or not. That will make sure that all stakeholders are aware that indeed an external expert was invited to facilitate the strategic plan as it has been established to be the best way of developing a strategic plan.

5.2.6 Regular feedback to staff regarding the development of the strategic plan

The response to a regular feedback to staff regarding the development of the strategic plan revealed that 63 (55,8%) of the staff member respondents expressed their satisfaction regarding the regular feedback as being effective. further, 18 (15,9%) expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the regular feedback. Whereas, 32 (28,3%) were not sure whether regular feedback was given or not.

It is thus evident from the results that regular feedback is not given to staff. Of the 113 respondents 50 (44,2%) expressed that they are either not satisfied or sure whether feedback is given. Since it is impossible for everybody to physically participate in the strategic plan, it is of importance that everybody gets feedback on the strategic plan. That will ensure that everybody is participating. By providing feedback, those who are represented can provide input to their representatives and by so doing they will be participating in the development of the strategic plan, they will own it, and buy-in. But if no regular feedback is given, some staff members might feel excluded and de-motivated, and they believe strategic plan belong

to certain group of people. This might result in the rejection of the plan, lack of buy-in, lack of implementation and possibly performance gap.

It is recommended that in future all stakeholders must be given proper feedback to avoid the challenges identified above. This may boost the stakeholders' morale, restore their sense of belonging, and it makes it much easier to implement and achieve the strategic objectives and the critical success factors because they would believe they are part of the plan.

5.2.7 Regular feedback to students regarding the development of the strategic plan

The results of 21 (18,6%) and 59 (52,2%) indicate that the respondents were not satisfied and not sure respectively whether regular feedback was given to students regarding the development of strategic plan. Whereas 33 (29,2%) respondents reported that they are satisfied and agreed that regular feedback was given to students regarding the development of the strategic plan.

It is evident that no proper feedback is provided to students regarding the development of the strategic plan, which resulted into negative impact on the students. There could be a number of decisions taken during the development of the strategic plan which affects students as the primary clients. It should also be noted that students play a vital role in the development of the strategic plan by making sure that their rights as students are protected. In order to minimize unnecessary strikes and conflict between management and the students, it is of vital importance to give those who are represented regular feedback on the development of the strategic plan. It is recommended that for future research, management should ensure that the department of student affairs be entrusted with a responsibility to ensure that all students are given proper feedback on the development of the strategic plan.

5.2.8 Budget for the development and implementation of the strategic plan

The results for budget for the development of strategic planning revealed that 55 (48,7%) of the respondents agreed that there is a budget for developing the strategic plan. However, 4 (3,5%) of the respondents disagreed as they suggest that there is no budget for the development of the strategic plan. Surprisingly 54 (47,8%) of the respondents were not sure of the availability of budget for the development of the strategic planning. Moreover, the

results for budget for the implementation of the strategic planning revealed that 57 (50,4%) of the respondents agreed that there is a budget for the implementation of the strategic plan, while 5 (4,4%) of the respondents disagreed by indicating that there is no budget for the implementation of the strategic plan, whereas 51 (45,1%) of the respondents were not sure of the budget for the implementation of the strategic plan.

There is evidence that not all stakeholders are aware of any budget for either the development or the implementation of the strategic plan. This is another indication that most of the stakeholders are not given feedback by those who represent them in the development of strategic planning. It might be an indication that stakeholders are not aware of the budget because they are excluded from the entire strategic planning process.

The researcher therefore recommends that in future the representative of stakeholders in the development of strategic planning should be equipped through training on how to give feedback to their constituencies. Management should ensure that each representative of trade union should develop and submit a plan on how and when to provide feedback to his/her constituency. Management should provide time to all representatives to give feedback to their members. By doing this all stakeholders will be enlightened on the progress of the development and the finalisation of the strategic planning. This will also assist when staff negotiates for their salary increase and when students negotiate with management on the students fee increase.

5.2.9 Involvement of stakeholders in strategic planning has effect on implementation of the strategic plan, Performance and buy-in by stakeholders

The result on the effect of implementation revealed that 90 (79,7%) of the respondents agreed that the lack of involvement has effect on implementation. 16 (14,2) of the respondents were not sure if the lack of stakeholders involvement in the strategic planning has any effect on the implementation of the strategic plan. Seven of the respondents (6,2%) disagreed that the lack of stakeholders involvement in the strategic planning has effect on the implementation of the strategic plan.

The results on the effect of performance revealed that 86 (76,1%) of the respondents agreed that the lack of stakeholders' involvement in the strategic planning has an effect on

performance. 22 (19,5%) of the respondents were not sure if the lack of stakeholders' involvement has effect on performance and 5 (4.4%) of the respondents disagree that the lack of stakeholders involvement in the strategic planning has effect on performance.

The result on the buy-in by stakeholders revealed that 78 (69,0%) of the respondents agreed that the lack of involvement has effect on the buy-in by stakeholders. 28 (24,8%) of the respondents were not sure if the lack of stakeholders involvement in the strategic planning has effect on the buy-in by stakeholders and 7 (6.2%) of the respondents disagreed that the lack of stakeholders involvement in the strategic planning has effect on the buy-in by stakeholders.

These results suggest that stakeholders' involvement in the strategic planning has a major effect on the service delivery, implementation of the strategic planning, performance and staff motivation. Staff members become motivated and committed to service delivery and can implement the strategic plan, that are capable of, resulting in better service in their job, be motivated, that they will buy-in to the strategic plan and own it, by so doing, they ensure that all objectives of the institution are achieved and the critical success factors are attended to effectively.

These results suggest that if the university management ensures that all stakeholders are involved in the strategic planning it would benefit the university. The core business of teaching and learning can be carried out without noticeable hindrances.

5.2.10 Communication of strategic plan to the university

Out of 113, 108 (95,5%) of the respondents indicate that the strategic plan must be communicated to the University Community. 4 (3,5%) of the respondents were not sure if the strategic plan has to be communicated to the university community, whereas only 1 (0,9%) respondent disagree that the strategic plan must be communicated to the university community. The results of this study suggest that strategic plan should be communicated to the university community.

This is a challenge to management because strategic plan is a working document which needs to be communicated and known by all and sundry. It is recommended that management should ensure that each staff member has a copy of strategic plan document. It is also recommended that students' representatives should have enough copies of the strategic plan document which they can share with their compatriots.

It should be noted that the University of Venda is situated in Thohoyandou, and is a rural university. Most of the service workers come from the rural area around Thohoyandou. Most of them are Venda speaking people who attended school until standard 5. With the assistance of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), they are attending classes to complete grades 8-12. They can therefore, read and speak Tshivenda. It is important for them to be included in the strategic planning of the University of Venda. If the strategic plan is written in English alone, they may feel excluded. It is important to include them by translating the document to the language which they can understand better, they can therefore be expected to implement, buy in, motivated and performs exceptionally well. It is therefore recommended that management should ensure that the next strategic plan document (and any other document pertaining to strategic plan) is translated to Tshivenda for those who do not understand English.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this study have led to the following recommendations for future research:

Future researchers should investigate strategies on how to improve the stakeholders' involvement in the strategic planning, in order to ensure smooth running of the strategic planning process, and the effective participation of stakeholders involved in the development of the strategic plan should be determined.

Future researchers should investigate whether intervention by management regarding stakeholders' involvement in the strategic planning would result in better service delivery. Further, it is highly recommended that future researchers should investigate the effect of the University's external stakeholders in the strategic planning of the institution. While this study established that lack of involvement of stakeholders in the strategic plan contributes to the poor performance standard, the extent of this performance needs to be investigated.

5.4 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was subject to the following limitations:

The strategic planning is a sensitive issue that puts challenges to most organisations. It demands the involvement of the organisations' management, staff and students. The researcher experienced challenges pertaining to getting back the questionnaire from the respondents, most especially academic staff members, because the questionnaires were distributed towards the examinations time and most of the academics were busy with preparations for the examinations therefore; the researcher took more time to complete the study than expected.

Because of her tight work schedule and lack of resources, for example, the researcher has to travel to Pretoria at the University of South Africa (UNISA), in order to consult with the supervisor, which was also the major study limitation.

5.5 SUMMARY

In this study, the effects of stakeholders' involvement on the University of Venda strategic planning were brought to light. The results showed that not all stakeholders are involved in the development of the strategic planning process. The results further show that stakeholders' are not satisfied with the way in which feedback and communication towards the strategic planning is handled at the University of Venda. Results showed that there is lack of buy-in by stakeholders, lack of staff motivation, lack of service delivery as most of the stakeholders believe the strategic plan is imposed on them rather than being part of it and own it. The results suggest that if Management of the University intervene in resolving the issues of lack of involvement of stakeholders in the strategic planning, all the factors affecting the dissatisfaction of stakeholders' involvements in the strategic planning can be addressed

At the University of Venda, the researcher would like to emphasise that there should be on-going process of strategic plan review in order to update and involve the university community on the strategic planning. The stakeholders' involvement and consultation at the University of Venda strategic planning should be taken to another level since most staff members are not aware of the strategic planning at all. The translation of strategic plan

document into the “Venda Language” which can largely be read by the majority of service staff should be given a priority. Management should ensure that the strategic plan document is translated to Tshivenda, with the intention of involving and communicating the information, for example the strategic objectives and critical key success factors, to the majority of lower level staff, who are also mainly expected to implement the same.

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APPENDIX A

P O Box 2852
Thohoyandou
0950
14 October 2011

The Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic
University of Venda
PO Box 5050
Thohoyandou, 0950

Dear Professor Mbhenyane

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A STUDY AT UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

I kindly request your permission and support to conduct research at the University of Venda. The intention is to gather information about the involvement of various stakeholders in the strategic planning of the University of Venda. I would therefore request permission to access information on strategic planning. This is the focus of a mini-dissertation I am currently undertaking with UNISA for the fulfillment of the requirements for MTech in Business Administration.

Participants will be given a questionnaire to answer and it is anticipated to take about 20 minutes.

Please rest assured that the information collected will be used for academic purposes only and will be used with highest confidentiality. In this regards, no names are required. My study supervisor and his contact details are as follows: Mr Adewale Aregboshola, (012- 429 8505).

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Muvhulawa Esther Munano

APPENDIX B

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please provide the following biographical information that will be used solely for research purposes.

Tick or cross only one answer per question.

1. Age

17-21 years	1
22-26 years	2
27-31 years	3
32-36 years	4
37 years and older	5

2. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

3. Population group

Black	1
White	2
Coloured	3

4. Highest Qualifications

Not passed	1
Matric	2
Diploma	3
Certificate	4
First Degree	5
Post graduate	6

5. Occupational category

Management	1
Academic staff	2
Administrative staff	3
Service staff	4
Students	5

6. Number of years in the organization

0 - 5 years	1
6-10 years	2
11-15 years	3
16-20 years	4
20 years above	5

7. Personal involvement in 2009-2013 University of Venda Strategic Planning

Involved	1
Not involved	2
Represented	3

SECTION B: INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA STRATEGIC PLAN

For each of the following indicate what applies to you regarding the involvement of stakeholders in the University of Venda Strategic Plan process

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. All stakeholders are invited to participate on strategic plan	1	2	3	4	5
9. Trade Unions participation in the strategic planning process	1	2	3	4	5
10. Workshops are conducted to all stakeholders on how to participate in the strategic planning	1	2	3	4	5
11. Awareness Campaign are conducted to inform all stakeholders about the strategic plan	1	2	3	4	5
12. External expert is invited to facilitate the strategic plan	1	2	3	4	5
13. There is a regular feedback to staff regarding the development of the strategic plan	1	2	3	4	5
14. There is regular feedback to students regarding the development of the strategic plan	1	2	3	4	5

15. There is a budget for the development of strategic planning	1	2	3	4	5
16. There is a budget for the implementation of the strategic planning	1	2	3	4	5
17. Involvement of stakeholders in strategic planning has effect on :					
17.1. Implementation of strategic plan	1	2	3	4	5
17.2 Performance	1	2	3	4	5
17.3 Buy-in by stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5
18. Strategic Plan must be communicated to university community	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for participating in this research

APPENDIX C

PO Box 2852
Thohoyandou
0950

24 October 2011

Dear Respondent

I am currently conducting a study on the “Involvement of Stakeholders in the Strategic Planning of the University of Venda” through the University of South Africa. I am collecting data for the fulfilment of the requirements for MTech in Business Administration. I would therefore request you to assist me on this study by completing the questionnaire.

Your response will be solely used for academic purpose only and will be treated with highest confidentiality.

Thanking you in advance

Yours faithfully,

Muvhulawa Esther Munano
076 434 6582